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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL
Rice: 'Iran is a Serious Issue to be Solved' - Vatan
\$400 Million Budget from Pentagon for the Pro-American
Journalists - Posta
US Tries to Correct its Image with Bribes - Aksam
The Number of CIA Agents will Increase in Turkey - Sabah
FM Gul Calls on Turkmen to Participate in Iraqi Elections -
Milliyet
Barzani: 'A General Amnesty will Solve the PKK issue' -
Aksam
Imam-Hatip Graduates Given Access to Universities - Hurriyet
Government Clears the Obstacles from the Path of Imam-Hatip
Graduates - Milliyet
Gen. Buyukanit: 'Turkish Military Gets Its Authority from
Ataturk' - Milliyet
Van University Rector Askin Trial Starts - Sabah
The Court Rejects the Release Request of Rector Yucel Askin
- Hurriyet
Tense Budget Discussions at the Parliament - Hurriyet
The most tense Day in the Parliament - Vatan
Moody's Upgrade Turkey's Credit Rating - Sabah

OPINION MAKERS

Bush Admits Intelligence on Iraq Wrong - Yeni Safak
Pentagon puts \$400 Million on the Side for a Psychological
War - Zaman
The US Makes Preparations to Attack Iran - Cumhuriyet

General Buyukanit: "I did not Come to US to ask for Approval" - Zaman
US Embassy Officials Question AKP on Alcohol Ban - Cumhuriyet
Talabani Requests General Amnesty from Turkey for the PKK - Yeni Safak
No Release for Rector Taskin - Radikal

BRIEFING

Government Opens the University Doors to Imam-Hatip Students: All papers cover extensively the news about a regulatory change that allows Imam-Hatip (Islamic schools) graduates to enter any university they want by completing the necessary courses in the correspondence ("open") high school system. "Hurriyet" reports that the Higher Education Board (YOK) announced that they will be applying to the court for the regulation to be annulled.

Tense Budget Debates at the Parliament: During parliamentary debates yesterday on next year's budget, opposition parties harshly criticized the Government for its domestic and foreign policies. "Sabah" says CHP leader Deniz Baykal criticized the Prime Minister mainly for his comments related to the Turkish national identity, saying that 'Turkey has no such problems'.

Rector Askin Trial: Today's papers give extensive coverage to the trial of Van University Rector Prof. Yucel Askin for irregularities in the university hospital. "Sabah" reports that the previous judge who had objected to Askin's jail sentence was replaced with a new judge. The trial lasted

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for six hours and the court rejected the prosecutors request for Askin's release. The trial was postponed to December 29 due to the need to hear other defendants.

General Buyukanit Comments: Turkish Land Forces Commander General Buyukanit described his visit to the US as extremely positive. Buyukanit said that there were some news reports claiming that he came to the US to get some form of approval. He responded that the Turkish Military gets its authorization only from Ataturk and from laws. He added that this is only a routine visit and such visits are paid to many countries.

Pentagon Bribes Media for Pro-American news: All papers report on the Pentagon information program first reported on by "USA Today." Several papers claim that the US has allocated \$400 million to be paid to pro-American journalists for their articles. "Zaman" says that this money is to be used as a psychological warfare tactic by the US.

The US Prepares to Strike Iran: "Cumhuriyet" reports on its front page that US is stocking fuel oil for jets brought to Iskenderun airport in October and November. The paper claims that the US is getting ready to strike Iran.

Barzani and Talabani Remarks: In remarks attributed to Barzani in "Aksam" and Talabani in "Yeni Safak," Iraqi officials requested a general amnesty from Turkey for the PKK militants in the mountains. Barzani reportedly said that this is the only solution for the PKK issue.

EDITORIAL OPINION: IRAQ ELECTIONS

"Democracy vs. Anti-Democracy"
Hasan Cemal observed in the mainstream "Milliyet" (12/15): "The main issue in the Iraq elections is the battle between those who are for democracy and those who are against it. This time Sunni participation is even more important than before because it directly links to the legitimacy of the elections and Iraq's stability. There is also some speculation and concern regarding the possibility of an

emergence of an Islamic dictatorship in Iraq right after the demise of the Saddam Hussein dictatorship. In any case, this is a very important day for Iraq. Elections can either pave the way for stability and democracy or cause chaos and division. Let's hope for the first possibility as this also has important consequences for Turkey."

"The Iraqi Election Also Draws Turkey's Destiny"

Cuneyt Ulsever commented in the mass appeal "Hurriyet" (12/15): "There are two facts which cannot be changed: the US has clearly failed to bring peace and order to Iraq; and tmore effort is made every day in the US to bring the Iraq war to an end. The US is aware of the fact that it will have to pull out from Iraq gradually. However a US withdrawal without any back up is going to create nothing but chaos in Iraq. In the meantime, the US has some other business on the agenda, like Syria and Iran. At this point, there is no way for the US to achieve a UN mandate for their future efforts. Therefore the US is trying to build bilateral or regional support. Turkey is on the top of this list, and that gives Turkey a valuable card to play."

"Iraq is a Turning Point Not Only for the Mideast, But also for Turkey and the US"

Cengiz Candar wrote in the tabloid "Bugun" (12/15): "The election in Iraq is the most important event of 2005 in world politics. Currently Iraq is at the center of world politics and events there directly or indirectly concern

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every country on the globe. The result of the elections will shape the future destiny of the Middle East with both regional and global impact. The election is, of course, very important for Turkey as well. Given the current situation in Iraq, unity can still emerge after the elections. This possibility, despite all the setbacks, is becoming stronger than the possibility of a divided Iraq."

WILSON